

**REPORT TO** EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL  
**Date of Meeting:** 15 September, 2015 & 20 October 2015  
**Report of:** Bindu Arjoon, Assistant Director Customer Access

**Title:** Partnership Delivery Officer

**Is this a Key Decision? No**

**Is this an Executive or Council Function? Council**

**1. What is the report about?**

This report informs members of the Council's work as part of the first phase of the Troubled Families Programme and seeks support for increasing the Council's engagement in Phase Two of the programme, now called Early Help For Families. The report also outlines the emerging agenda in co design and co delivery with partners and proposes that the Council increases its engagement with this agenda to recognise the benefits.

**2. Recommendations:**

- i. That Members note the areas of the Council's work impacted by the Early Help approach and benefits of working with other agencies to support families and vulnerable individuals.
- ii. That Executive recommends to Council the creation of a temporary post for 18 months to support this work on an invest to save basis and agrees to receive a monitoring report on its success in reducing the costs to the Council, using the Home Office's Cost Calculator.
- iii. That Executive recommends to Council the approval of a sum of up to £38,000 to fund the proposed post; to be met from the Housing Revenue Account working balance and General Fund balances.

**3. Reasons for the recommendation:**

- i. As the public sector continues to respond to financial challenges, working alongside agencies supporting the same individuals or families is an efficient and more effective use of public funds.
- ii. Access to advice and support professionals from other agencies enables the Council to develop a more holistic service to our residents

**4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources.**

- i. There is a proposal to create a temporary post for 18 months. The Job Description and Person Specification for the post is attached as an Appendix to this report. Should members be minded to support the creation of this post, a Job Evaluation will be conducted to determine the grade of the post. However, based on an indicative grade 9, it is anticipated that the maximum salary for this post, including on costs is in

the region of £38, 000. In recognition of the fact that a proportion of the families that we will be working with are the Council's tenants, this post will be jointly funded from the Housing Revenue Account and the General Fund. Based on Phase One of the Programme, the proposed initial split is 40/60. However, this will be reviewed as we engage further in Phase Two as the widening of criteria to include families in debt may mean that we are working with a increased number of tenants.

- ii. There is an expectation that each of the Directorates directly affected will identify a Lead, at senior level, for the Early Help Programme.

## **5. Section 151 Officer comments:**

Funding for the temporary post can be met from General Fund balances and from the HRA working balance for the 18 month period, on the basis that the Council may benefit from compensating reduced costs of dealing with troubled families residing in both private and Council owned housing. The resulting net cost to the Council will be monitored using the Home Office's cost calculator in order to inform any further funding requests.

## **6. What are the legal aspects?**

The creation of and recruitment to this new post must be conducted in accordance with the Council's relevant recruitment policies.

## **7. Monitoring Officer's comments:**

This report raises no issues for the Monitoring Officer

## **8. Report details:**

### **8.1 Background**

The Troubled Families programme was launched in 2011. Troubled Families were identified as facing significant issues and challenges which may impact on the community around them. The public sector tends to face high costs when addressing the complex issues often related to those families. A Troubled Families team, based in DCLG, was established to join up efforts across the whole of government and to provide expert help to local authorities to drive forward the programme. The aim was to work with local authorities and their partners to help 120,000 troubled families in England turn their lives around by 2015.

Government data collected in October and November 2011, estimated that £9 billion is spent annually on troubled families – an average of £75,000 per family each year. Of this, an estimated £8 billion is spent reacting to the problems these families either experience or and cause with just £1 billion being spent on helping families to solve and prevent problems in the longer term.

### **8.2 The Troubled Families Programme**

Phase 1 of the Troubled Families programme, targeted the following issues:

- getting children back into school

- reducing youth crime and anti-social behaviour
- putting adults on a path back to work
- reducing the high costs these families place on the public sector each year

The Government encouraged local authorities to work with families in ways the evidence shows is more effective, such as:

- joining up local services
- dealing with each family's problems as a whole rather than responding to each problem, or person, separately
- appointing a single key worker to get to grips with the family's problems and work intensively with them to change their lives for the better for the long term
- using a mix of methods that support families and challenge poor behaviour

The government is increasing local authority budgets by £448 million over 3 years on a payment-by-results basis.

### 8.3 Devon's Approach: Targeted Families

The programme has been delivered through a Devon-wide Executive Leadership Group, with City Council officer representation. Co-ordinators at District level have driven activity with partners, with additional focus provided through a number of Intensive Family Support (IFS) practitioners.

Both the local governance structure and IFS focus have demonstrated their effectiveness during the programme, and provide a foundation upon which to build an expanded partnership model.

In Exeter, 373 families were identified under Phase 1, 154 of these were living in Exeter City Council Properties.

### 8.4 The City Council's Role in Phase 2

The Devon programme has successfully met its targets for Phase One and it has been confirmed that the programme has been extended into phase 2 from April 2015, for a further 5 years, with an additional 400,000 families to benefit nationwide.

The problems targeted by Phase 1: youth crime, ASB, poor school attendance and unemployment remain relevant in phase 2. The eligibility has been expanded from phase 1. Shown below are the extended criteria and their relevance to City Council services:

1. Parents and children involved in crime or ASB (*Housing and Environmental Health*)
2. Children who have not been attending school regularly
3. Children who need help (*Environmental Health, Housing and Customer Access: Housing Options / Devon Homechoice / Local Welfare Support*)
4. Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion and young people at risk of worklessness (*Customer Access: One View of Debt, Housing*)

5. Families affected by domestic violence and abuse (*Housing and Customer Access: Housing Options*)
6. Parents and Children with a range of health problems (*Housing and Customer Access: Housing Options and Devon Homechoice*)

It is likely that the Customer Access and Housing Directorates will be most involved in the Early Help programme.

Phase 2 success will be measured through demonstrating significant and sustained success or continuous employment for families, providing family monitoring data, and understanding the financial benefits through cost savings calculators.

The principles underpinning the expanded programme reflect a formalised partnership arrangement, with the focus on providing a targeted approach to support for families, supporting them to address the issues affecting them, thereby reducing demand on services in the medium to long term.

Under Phase 2, it is planned that Troubled Families will sit within The Early Help Model developed by Devon County Council working with partners locally.

## 8.5 The Involvement of City Council Directorates in Phase Two.

**Payments & Collections Team.** At a Practitioners meeting where 21 cases were presented, over £9,056.51 was owed to Exeter City Council in unpaid Council Tax, Housing Benefit Overpayments and Rent Arrears. Under Phase 2 there will be an opportunity to refer families who are at risk of financial exclusion. Referrals may result in additional resources being made available, through family intervention workers to support customers to improve budgeting and to address the cause of their debts. The level of debt is likely to be a contributing factor to some of the other issues going on in the household and was not addressed under phase 1.

**Revenue and Benefits.** Will be there to assist in maximising income and assisting in claiming relevant Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefits for *Adults out of work or of financial exclusion and young people at risk of worklessness*. Priority referrals can be made to Exeter Money Advice Partnership for families with large debts – support through Troubled Families can assist families to attend relevant meetings and help with budgeting advice. Local Welfare Support can assist children who need help by providing families who need emergency assistance with food and to access support for utilities.

**Housing Options.** Housing options can assist in a number of areas, for example, *Families affected by domestic violence and abuse, Parents and Children with a range of health problems*. During phase 1, there has not been a holistic approach towards the role of housing in Troubled Families due in part to us not being engaged in the process. It is clear from the referrals presented at a recent Practitioners Meeting that there are issues relating to overcrowding. One family had 8 people living in the household which could explain some of the issues presenting by the family. An additional room might make all the difference in alleviating some of the ongoing

challenges and resulting in improved ASB, attendance at school. Housing Options currently contract Young Devon to provide support for 16 and 17 year olds and care leavers who are homeless or are facing homelessness. If a family has an identified 16 or 17 year old living in the household, then the Youth Homelessness Prevention worker can be utilised to provide mediation to prevent future homelessness, it can also be utilised to arrange respite care if deemed necessary to prevent potential relationship breakdown. Where parents and children with a range of health problems are contributed due to their living conditions then Devon Homechoice or making a Direct Match to meet that family's need can be used.

**Housing (Landlord Services)** – As a stock holding authority of 4,900 properties with 3,241 of our properties being potential family accommodation, it is likely that a number of the families who will be supported under phase 2 will be Exeter City Council tenants. If there is anti social behaviour in the household either from parents or from the children, this should trigger a referral to Early Help. There is then the potential to access Family Intervention Services to provide support to the family and Housing Customer Relations Officer and to try to prevent the need for legal action due to continued ASB. On average, an ASB case will cost up to £3,000 if uncontested. However, if contested, costs could be above £15,000. If a family is evicted there are then the potential additional costs of having to accommodate under a duty which could cost up to £10,000.

**Environmental Health** – Anti Social Behaviour and The Community Safety Partnership now falls into the realms of The Environmental Health Directorate. It is likely that Troubled Families referrals will be identified as part of the ASBAT (Anti Social Behaviour Action Team). Environmental Health will form a large part of identifying those families residing in Housing Association Properties and Private Rented Properties who will need a multi agency approach and meet the criteria for Troubled Families under Phase 2.

## **8.6 Proposals for Resourcing City Council work as part of Phase Two**

A focus on an Early Help Model would enable the Council the opportunity to make the most out of the potential resources on offer to support meeting the needs of residents. In order for this to be successful there has to be a corporate approach towards the programme as this relates to at least three directorates: Customer Access, Housing and Contracts and Environmental Health. Involvement in the Programme also allows us to understand the benefits and challenges with working with partners on an operational level as well as understand within the Council how we may need to adapt the way that we work between Council services and with partners.

Our proposal seeks Executive approval for the creation of an 18-month Partnership Delivery Officer post. The post will coordinate responses across the three directorates and to ensure referrals are being made if families meet the Troubled Families criteria. This role will be pivotal in ensuring that there is a comprehensive and consistent approach and can act independently in meeting the corporate needs. The role will also be responsible to deliver training and support to departments to ensure that they understand the opportunities provided by the Early Help programme and what resources can be utilised. Part of the remit of this post would be the use of the cost

calculator to identify the savings being made to services by working in this way, looking at the costs of, for example:

- taking a family to court because of ASB
- taking a family to court because of rent arrears
- evicting a family due to ASB including associated void costs
- evicting a family due to rent arrears including associated void costs
- a family going through the homeless process
- finding a family intentionally homeless
- taking a family to court due to Council Tax Arrears

After 14 months, an analysis will be done using the cost calculation to assess if the savings and/or non financial benefits merit a request to Members for a permanent post.

In addition, named leads will be identified within directorates who are responsible for ensuring that Early Help is given the appropriate leadership and focus. The Lead will be responsible for collating responses for the co-ordinator and identifying what future resources might be needed.

## **8.7 Reporting On Early Help Work**

As there are three Directorates involved in this work, it is proposed that reporting on progress be done to the Portfolio Holders for Customer Access, the Housing Revenue Account and Anti Social Behaviour and via the Transformation Plan to the Transformation Leadership Board. Quarterly reports will also be made to Scrutiny Community.

## **8.8 Wider Partnership Delivery Agenda**

This report has focused very much on the Early Help for Families agenda. However as alluded to at the start of the report, it is anticipated that that the proposed post also plays an active part in supporting delivery around other key areas of partnership work; i.e. the Exeter Community Hub which is being developed to address the needs of vulnerable client groups, including ex-Offenders and vulnerable adults who are Homeless and have substances abuse issues and/or mental health needs. This also reflects the Integrated Care Exeter programme where one of the key strands looking at providing responsive health care for individuals who are homeless and have particular and significant health needs are more holistically and more quickly supported. This piece of work is being led on by the City Council

## **9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?**

This Programme relates to three of the Council's Purposes as identified in the Corporate Plan- Help Me with My Financial/Housing Problem, Keep Me/My Environment Safe and Healthy and Find Me Somewhere Suitable to Live.

## **10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?**

**10.1** There is a risk that if the Council does not direct appropriate resources to this work, services will not realise the full benefits for our services working with the identified families.

This risk is being mitigated by proposing to create a post to co-ordinate our involvement in Early Help. There are only benefits from being proactively involved in addressing the social issues that families are facing. Benefits to the Council include:-

- Improved partnership working
- Improved access to Social Services through Early Help
- Increase in support for families to deal with budgeting, help address debt and in turn to assist them to prioritise payments to the Council
- Improvement in families health and wellbeing
- Decrease in evictions due to reduction in ASB / arrears
- Decrease in numbers of families needing to be accommodated in emergency accommodation

If the creation of the post is not agreed, the services would need to try and engage within existing resources but this is likely to be done in an unstructured and unco-ordinated way across the Council.

**10.2** If the creation of post is approved, there is a risk that we are not able to identify the cost savings to the Council of engaging in the Early Help Programme and therefore are not able to demonstrate the benefits to the Council of the post. This risk will be mitigated by ensuring that we are working with the County Council on identifying the costs using the Cost Calculator.

## **11. What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, community safety and the environment?**

The focus of the work in the Early Help model relates to identifying families and individuals who met the criteria and intervening to support them in a holistic way. If this approach is successful, as it has proved it can be in Phase One, this will have a positive impact on all of the factors identified here.

## **12. Are there any other options?**

The Strategic Management Team have discussed options for resourcing this work within existing staff resources but have come to the view that there is not sufficient existing capacity to appropriately test this new way of working.

Bindu Arjoon  
**Assistant Director Customer Access**

### **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)**

**Background papers used in compiling this report:-**

None

Contact for enquires:  
Democratic Services (Committees)  
Room 2.3  
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## Job Description

<b>JOB TITLE</b>	:	Delivery Partnerships Officer
<b>GRADE</b>	:	Grade to be determined
<b>POST NO</b>	:	
<b>SERVICE</b>	:	Customer Access
<b>UNIT</b>	:	
<b>REPORTS TO</b>	:	To be determined
<b>RESPONSIBLE FOR</b>	:	No direct reports
<b>LIAISON WITH</b>	:	Council officers across multiple departments, statutory agencies with regular contact with social services, hospitals, and schools, voluntary & community organisations, elected Members

### PURPOSE OF JOB

- To work with internal departments and external partners to achieve positive outcomes for families and vulnerable adults.
- To support a multi agency operational approach to safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults at Risk across the Council, providing support to front line officers as needed.
- To support local delivery models of joint working, including convening or attending key meetings and reviewing current working practices.
- To develop a cost calculator for Council services to represent internal and external costs and savings of working practices.
- To communicate to the Strategic Management Team and Elected Members the progress and future opportunities of multi agency programmes or integrated delivery for families and vulnerable adults.

## MAIN ACTIVITIES

1. To identify synergies between the local multi agency programmes (such as the Early Help Programme, Making Every Adult Matter and Integrated Care Exeter) and initiatives/priorities within the Council and other partners, in order to reduce duplication and maximise positive outcomes for families.
2. Identify and promote learning about different ways of working with families and vulnerable adults (to include learning from households themselves).
3. Work with service areas and through the practitioner forums to assist in the identification of families and vulnerable adults for inclusion in multi agency programmes.
4. Facilitate and encourage effective communication between partner agencies at all levels.
5. Involve the voluntary and community sector in the development and delivery of interventions that will assist identified households in the attainment of agreed outcomes.
6. Identify risks and issues that cannot be resolved at a Service level and need escalation to the Strategic Management Team and/or Elected Members.
7. Monitor the progress of local activity in achieving the targets and outcomes for the families and vulnerable adults identified as the target group within the Devon expanded Troubled Families programme(Early Help), Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM), projects from Integrated Care Exeter (ICE) and future partnership projects as identified by the Strategic Management Team.
8. Maintain local information on Huddle (or equivalent secure information sharing portals) that records the evidenced identification, engagement and achievement of local families and vulnerable against agreed actions/outcomes and the family practitioner working with each family, until this is decommissioned.
9. Produce reports at agreed intervals which contain data on the work being done to support families and progress being made as well as qualitative case studies.
10. To develop and maintain a cost calculator for Exeter City Council which identifies the monetary cost of interventions and the savings which can be found from increased multi agency working.
11. To provide specialised advice and support to front line officers to escalate safeguarding concerns through appropriate referrals and co-ordination of case conferences.

**DATE LAST UPDATED:** September 2015

# Person Specification



**JOB TITLE** : Partnerships Officer  
**GRADE** : Grade **POST NO :**  
**SERVICE** : Customer Access  
**UNIT** : Performance, Strategy & Resources

	<u>CRITERIA</u>	<u>ESSENTIAL/ DESIRABLE (E/D)</u>	<u>METHOD OF ASSESSMENT</u>
<u>QUALIFICATIONS &amp; KNOWLEDGE</u>	A degree in a relevant discipline (such as social or public policy), or an equivalent professional qualification (e.g. in community or social work), or significant equivalent experience that clearly demonstrates the ability to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of competing options, marshal & analyse complex information, and present recommendations & conclusions.	E	A, T
	Specialist knowledge of safeguarding responsibilities and procedures for children and vulnerable adults at risk.	E	A, I, T

<b><u>EXPERIENCE &amp; SKILLS</u></b>	<p>A minimum of three years' experience of successful multi-agency partnership working, ideally within a social care, housing or voluntary sector setting.</p> <p>Good knowledge of the health &amp; wellbeing agenda as it impacts on local authorities, the NHS &amp; voluntary sector, and of the relevant legislative &amp; policy framework</p> <p>Clear understanding of the financial climate in which local authorities and other parts of the public sector now operate, and the implications this has for traditional models of service provision.</p> <p>Excellent interpersonal, relationship-building &amp; influencing skills</p> <p>A clear understanding of how statutory and voluntary agencies are funded and the ability to translate this into data to track costs of interventions.</p> <p>An understanding of the challenges posed by vulnerable households and the impact of debt, worklessness, poor health, substance misuse, domestic violence and other pressures can influence behaviours and the practical ways in which Council officers, statutory partners and voluntary and community organisations might overcome these.</p>	<p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>D</p>	<p>A, I</p> <p>A, I</p> <p>A, I</p> <p>A, I</p> <p>A, I</p> <p>A, I</p>
<b><u>SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS &amp; ATTITUDE</u></b>	<p>Able to constructively challenge existing ways of working.</p> <p>Able to advocate and defend potentially sensitive &amp; unpopular courses of action.</p> <p>Able &amp; willing to advocate on behalf of socially excluded or marginalised groups and challenge stereotyping &amp; discrimination.</p>	<p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p>	<p>A, I</p> <p>A, I</p> <p>I</p>
<b><u>OTHER</u></b>	<p>Able to attend and make presentations to evening meetings as necessary.</p>	<p>E</p>	<p>A</p>

**COMPLETED BY: Bindu Arjoon**

**DATE:** September 2015

**CATEGORY:** A – Application, C - Certificates, T – Testing, I – Interview, R - Reference